



# City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

## SEATTLE PLANNING COMMISSION JULY 27, 2006 APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

### **Commissioners in Attendance**

Jerry Finrow - Chair, Tony To – Vice-Chair, Linda Amato, George Blomberg, Mahlon Clements, Tom Eanes, Chris Fiori, Martin Kaplan, Valerie Kinast, Michelle Mattox, Kevin McDonald, Kirsten Pennington, Carl See, and Steve Sheehy

### **Commissioners Absent**

Hilda Blanco and Kay Knapton

### **Commission Staff**

Barbara Wilson – Director, Scott Dvorak – Planning Analyst, Robin Magonegil – Administrative Assistant, and Justin McCaffree – SPC Intern

### **Guests**

Gary Johnson, John Rahaim, and Diane Sugimura - DPD

### **In Attendance**

Hoang Pham, Hung Pham, Taneshaa Prince, and Katrina Bowser

***Please Note: Seattle Planning Commission meeting minutes are not an exact transcript but instead represent key points and the basis of the discussion.***

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 am by Chair Jerry Finrow.

### **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

- Approve July 13, 2006 SPC Minutes

**ACTION:** Commissioner Linda Amato moved that the July 13, 2006 minutes be approved. Commissioner Tony To seconded the approval. The motion passed unanimously.

- Chair's Report
  - Announcements & Upcoming Meetings

Chair Finrow noted that the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meetings have been cancelled in August to accommodate the SPC's traditional August recess. Instead, education forums have been scheduled during our regular meeting times. He encouraged the Commissioners to attend these forums.

- Thursday, August 10, 3:00pm – 5:30pm **Topics:** *Comp Plan 101* and *History of Planning and Development Patterns in Seattle* in Seattle City Hall, Boards and Commissions Meeting Room, L280
- Friday, August 18, Noon to 1:30pm **Topic:** *Center City and Downtown Livability* Location to be determined – Bring your brown bag lunch
- Thursday, August 24, 7:30am – 9:00am **Topics :** *Land Use 101* and *SEPA & Environmental Review* in Seattle City Hall, Boards and Commissions Meeting Room, L280

Chair Finrow noted that the next Full Commission meeting will be Thursday, September 14, 3:00-5:30 pm. He pointed out that the next regularly scheduled Executive Meeting is scheduled on Tuesday, September 5th, 7:30 - 9:00 a.m., which is the day after Labor Day and Barbara Wilson will still be on vacation. Therefore, Chair Finrow proposed that the meeting be changed to Thursday, September 7th, 7:30 - 9:00 a.m. He asked that Commissioners please reply to the email that Ms. Wilson sent out confirming their availability for that time.

Chair Finrow then announced that Planning Commission Analyst, Scott Dvorak has accepted another position and will be leaving the Commission. He said that Scott has accepted a position as a Land Use and Planning Specialist at DPD and that he will be working in Land Use and Policy Development. Chair Finrow noted that while this is a fantastic new opportunity for Scott and we wish him well in his new pursuit, we will all miss his outstanding work on behalf of the Planning Commission. He added that it has been a pleasure to work with Scott the last year and half. Chair Finrow noted that Scott will be staying on with the Commission until sometime in the beginning of September; the details are still being worked out.

#### – Project & Legislative Updates

Chair Finrow mentioned that next week there will be two public hearings on the proposed legislation that address ethical standards for volunteer advisory bodies. He added that Barbara Wilson will be sending out additional information to Commissioners about the hearings.

#### ▪ ACTION ITEMS

##### Detached ADU memo to the UDP Committee

**Note for the Record:** “On July 21st the Seattle Planning Commission approved and sent a memorandum to the Seattle City Council Urban Development and Planning Committee regarding current legislation to allow DADU’s in Southeast Seattle. The Planning Commission urged the Committee to not adopt a proposed amendment that would require continuous ownership of a lot for three years prior to development of a DADU (in essence, a 3-year waiting period). The memo also acknowledged the rigorous and abundant public involvement that has taken place around this issue starting back in 2001.” Of the 16 members eligible to vote 16 vote to approve. The Action was unanimously approved. (See attachment #1 for details)

Commissioner Tom Eanes asked what the outcome was on that the effort to approve the legislation. Ms. Wilson replied that Councilmember Tom Rasmussen removed his amendment (the 3 year waiting period) and that the other amendments were passed by the Committee and added to the legislation. Ms. Wilson noted that the Committee voted to move the legislation to the full Council for their meeting on Monday.

Scott Dvorak provided information on the specifics of the amendments; 1) increased the minimum lot size from 3,000 to 4,000 square feet, 2) reduced the maximum size of the unit from 1,000 to 800 square feet, 3) made some requirements on where the entrance could be, and 4) the differentiated between tenants renting rooms in the house and someone renting the DADU.

Commissioner Tony To reported that Councilmember Conlin was at the Southeast District Council meeting and brought up his concern that there is a maximum of 8 persons for a residence. It was clarified that the limit is 8 for the entire residence including the DADU.

Commissioner Martin Kaplan asked if there was any discussion on enforcement. Ms. Wilson replied that there has been a lot of discussion about enforcement and that this code will be enforced in the same manner that all codes are enforced.

### **Bridging the Gap – Letter of Support to City Council**

**Note for the Record: On July 19, 2006 Seattle Planning Commission approved and sent the final draft of the letter to Council President Nick Licata to express Commission support of the ‘Bridging the Gap’ transportation initiative. The Commission urged the Council to adopt the full scope of this initiative in order to adequately address Seattle’s transportation needs. Of the 16 members eligible to vote, 14 vote to approve. The Action was approved. (See attachment #2 for details)**

### **Vision 2020 Update DEIS – Comments to PSRC**

Ms. Wilson pointed out to the Commission that this letter was handed out at the last Full Commission meeting. She reminded the Commissioners that they referred the letter back to the Land Use and Transportation Committee for additional work. Ms. Wilson stated that the timeline is that it needs to be delivered to PSRC by July 31.

Commissioner Chris Fiori noted that this is a difficult issue. He added that of the four alternatives the two that seem to be the most sound are the Metropolitan Cities and the Large Cities. He noted that the report also looked at the impact on industrial lands and issues on housing and transportation.

Commissioner To mentioned that he thought the Commission should think about another issue that has to do with neighborhood character. He added that it seems that we might want to think about some comments on that subject.

Chair Finrow suggested that we add some language that states “respecting existing community character, we support the Metropolitan Cities or Larger Cities alternatives.”

Commissioner Mahlon Clements stated that we may want to add something about the quality of development as well.

Commissioner Linda Amato suggested the wording “consistent with neighborhood plans.”

Commissioner Kaplan agreed, but noted that it was perhaps not strong enough.

Chair Finrow noted that the PSRC deals with these things on a global scale. He suggested that we vote on this with a note about neighborhood planning.

Commissioner Fiori mentioned that some of the growth numbers on this are astounding. He added that if PSRC were to adopt the most aggressive growth targets for Seattle, it would mean a major rezoning, a lot more townhouses and maybe even some changes to single-family zoning.

Ms. Wilson noted that this only the first opportunity to comment and that PSRC will come back with a preferred alternative that they will take additional comments on.

**ACTION: Commissioner Kirsten Pennington moved that the letter be approved. Commissioner Tony To seconded the approval. The motion passed unanimously. (See attachment #3 for details)**

- Transit Now – Comments to King County Executive & Council

**ACTION: Commissioner Tom Eanes moved that the letter be approved. Commissioner Linda Amato seconded the approval. The motion passed unanimously. (See attachment #4 for details)**

- Joint Commission letter to Council regarding Public Vote on the Viaduct

Ms. Wilson noted that Design Commission asked the Planning Commission if they would join with them in recommending to City Council that they send forward a recommendation to the Governor on the Alaskan Way Viaduct and seawall project rather than adding a referendum to the November ballot. Ms. Wilson continued that if we do not make a decision today, we would need to do so within the next couple of days. She noted that the options are to approve this today, to not do this at all, and to have further discussion about it with the idea that the Planning Commission will send a letter later.

Commissioner Tom Eanes asked what the objective is and will this accomplish that. Chair Finrow replied that he felt the letter is intended to encourage elected officials to not have a public vote but rather for them to take on that role. He pointed out that it may be hard to determine whether our opinion will have any effect but the sense is to go on the record in support of them making the decision.

Commissioner Kevin McDonald noted that he is in favor of the City Council making this decision but in terms of the Planning Commission's role he feels that our role is to advise the Council on substantive matters relating to land use and transportation and not procedural matters on how they approach projects and issues.

Commissioner Eanes added that he agrees with that and that the Council ought to make the decision but whether or not they do this is a political matter. He feels that this letter would not be effective.

Commissioner Martin Kaplan noted that, although he agrees with Commissioner McDonald, he feels that this letter offers our advice. He added that he spoke with Councilmember Steinbrueck and he has asked Commissioner Kaplan what the Commission thinks about this. Commissioner Kaplan noted that he feels this is the perfect opportunity to let the Council know what the Commission thinks.

**ACTION: Commissioner Steve Sheehy moved that the Seattle Planning Commission not join the Design Commission in this letter. Commissioner Kevin McDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 9 – 5.**

## **COMMISSION DISCUSSION**

### **Planning Director Report - John Rahaim, Department of Planning & Development**

John Rahaim reported on the Industrial Land Policy. He noted that City Council allocated \$150,000 of new money to DPD to look at projections and demand for industrial lands both regionally and in Seattle. Mr. Rahaim added that Tom Hauger is leading this effort in his department.

Mr. Rahaim noted that a couple of the issues came up that might be helpful to have a discussion with the Planning Commission about. One of these issues is how much we can get into the economics of typical industrial uses to understand their needs in land development. He added that the common wisdom they have been operating under is that by keeping industrial land zoned as industrial it keeps the land cost low, allowing industrial users to stay. Mr. Rahaim stated that it would be good to understand the specifics of that.

Mr. Rahaim noted that the second issue is the public outreach strategy and how they engage the community. He added that he thinks they need to be cautious in their messaging. Mr. Rahaim suggested that it would be helpful to DPD for the Planning Commission to help them think through the right questions to ask on the economics issue and the right strategy for engaging the industrial property owners on this.

Commissioner Sheehy asked the fundamental question of whether or not industrial zoning keeps the cost of land down. He added that he suspects that it does somewhat but maybe not enough. Commissioner Sheehy noted that it would be good to see the data.

Commissioner Mahlon Clements stated that that question becomes more complex the more that you think about it. He added that it is time to check in and see whether this zoning is appropriate.

Chair Finrow mentioned the need to understand what industrial means as the nature of work has changed so much over the years. He added that he is confused about what an industrial use is anymore. Chair Finrow suggested that another thing that we may want to look at is the relationship between contemporary industrial uses and other land uses. He added that originally zoning was used to separate uses but wondered how much of that is necessary any more.

Mr. Rahaim responded that scale is also an issue. He noted that the question came up in Council about a category that is called food processing and the question was about a chocolate making shop.

Commissioner Clements stated that this has to do with health and that is the core of why all this has happened. He noted that it should be revisited why we are even regulating this in the first place.

Commissioner Blomberg noted that Tom Hauger has been very helpful to the Planning Commission. He added that the scope of work would be great. Commissioner Blomberg wondered if we could discuss this survey as a data gathering step to help us assess preference and needs. He noted that the outreach aspect is something that the Commission would be eager to help with. Commissioner Blomberg continued that having some way to capture contemporary and past uses would be good within the current industrial zone. Commissioner Blomberg wondered whether the Mayor's office has a committee or something like that working on this.

Diane Sugimura replied that Seattle First is made up of industrial property owners and City staff that help when there is need to find land. Commissioner Blomberg suggested that it would be helpful if that kind of activity is accessible to this study.

Mr. Rahaim then moved on to discuss neighborhood plans. Some of them have been in place for almost 6 years. By some standards 6 years is not a very long time for planning to be implemented. He added that the only neighborhood plan that is being officially updating at this time is South Lake Union. Mr. Rahaim indicated that they are getting a lot of requests to look at components of plans. He believes that this speaks to that 25 – 30% of the plan items that were basically identifying the need to do more planning in the neighborhoods. Mr. Rahaim noted that there are about 30% of the projects that are not completed because they cannot be done due to lack of resources or that they require extensive urban design work.

Mr. Rahaim stated what Department of Neighborhoods is trying to figure out is the message that they send to neighborhoods to say what is it that they can do and under what conditions will the City consider either updating a plan or part of a neighborhood plan. He added that his sense is that most of the neighborhood folks are not saying "let's do new neighborhood plans" but are saying they would like implement what hasn't been implemented yet and to help them out on these strategic focused efforts in certain places.

Mr. Rahaim stated that the sense of the Mayor's office and DPD is that when we do undertake a neighborhood plan update it should be led by DPD.

### **Briefing – Urban Livability Update**

#### **Diane Sugimura & Gary Johnson, Department of Planning & Development**

Chair Finrow noted that last year there were a number of discussions relating to height and density and he asked Diane Sugimura and Gary Johnson to start off their briefing by providing information on how the zoning was changed when it was finally adopted.

Diane Sugimura gave a recap of the areas that DPD is working on. Ms. Sugimura started off by discussing the livability resolution. She noted that the Mayor did not sign the resolution due to issues with the process not with the substance. When the legislation came to him the Mayor had not had the opportunity to have input into the final form of the bill, and therefore was unwilling to sign it. Ms. Sugimura added that there were things that were added at the end that were difficult for the Mayor to

fully agree with but that there was no disagreement with the majority of it and, as a matter of fact, much of it was already part of DPD's work plan.

Ms. Sugimura went through the livability resolution. She noted that Center City housing affordability is an issue that is very much a concern of the Executive and DPD has been working with the Office of Housing on workforce housing issues. Ms. Sugimura noted that the Office of Housing is currently doing an inventory of downtown housing.

Mr. Johnson added that new legislation, House Bill 2984, passed in the State legislature which will help strengthen legal authority to move more strongly in the direction of inclusionary zoning.

Ms. Sugimura mentioned the livable wage issue. She noted that in collecting information on wages it is difficult to get useful information by specific areas of the city. The information is gathered city-wide basis so it will be hard to determine what is happening in just downtown.

Ms. Sugimura noted that as for the provision of human services she feels that they need to go back to Council and try to get further clarification on what they were trying to get at with that aspect of the legislation.

Mr. Johnson stated that in trying to bring families into Center City area there is the fundamental need for schools. He also pointed out that one thing that is being considered is to figure out a way to capture the children that are already coming downtown for other reasons – daycare, special programs, etc. These children would be good candidates for a downtown school even if they don't live downtown.

Commissioner Clements pointed out that he resides in a neighborhood that would be considered very livable by many ways and yet many people still move out once their children begin to get older. He opined that it was more than just housing and schools that make a place livable, but the whole environment.

Mr. Johnson then discussed the issue of preserving existing historic or older buildings that provide neighborhood character and affordable housing options downtown.

Mr. Johnson continued with information on plans for parks and open space downtown. His group is studying existing open space and looking at new ways to provide additional open space. Several months ago, City Council passed a resolution to foster the development of a significant open space in Belltown. That work is underway. The Center City group is looking at streetscapes and pedestrian ways as well.

Another recent activity is the signage of downtown public open spaces. There are many public open spaces that developers have included on their property in exchange for increased height or density. Many of those spaces are not clearly available to the public even though the spaces are required to be open to the public. The new signage program will help identify these spaces and encourage the public to take advantage of them.

Director Sugimura then brought up the tower spacing regulations in effect downtown, and how DPD, working with a small community group, would be evaluating the recent code revisions as real projects are proposed.

Mr. Johnson pointed out that the North Lot finally has a development proposal that has been made public. He feels that it is a transformational development because of its quantity of housing units,

inclusion of a grocery store and other community amenities, all things that the Pioneer Square community has been looking for years. Nearly 1000 units of housing will double the number of units in the neighborhood.

And finally, Mr. Johnson pointed out that many cities are dealing with public nuisance issues – especially the nightclub issue as has recently been in the news in Seattle. As downtown living has become more popular there are more conflicts with downtown activities – which can be loud, late at night, etc. Those activities are part of what makes living downtown desirable, yet they can also cause problems for other residents. Finding the right balance will take some effort – a balance between a vibrant, well-managed downtown with many activities and also a good place to live.

Mr. Johnson then mentioned the Alcohol Impact Area effort and that the expansion of the area was being considered that evening at a hearing.

Chair Finrow thanked Diane Sugimura and Gary Johnson for their information and time.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Finrow adjourned the meeting at 9:02 am.



## MEMORANDUM

To Seattle Planning Commission  
From: Barbara Wilson, SPC Director  
RE: SPC ACTION

July 21, 2006

### **SPC ACTION**

***Summary of Action:*** Seattle Planning Commission memorandum to the Seattle City Council Urban Development and Planning Committee regarding current legislation to allow DADU's in Southeast Seattle. The Planning Commission urges the Committee not adopt a proposed amendment that would require continuous ownership of a lot for three years prior to development of a DADU (in essence, a 3-year waiting period). The memo also acknowledges the rigorous and abundant public involvement that has taken place around this issue starting back in 2001.

### **COMMISSIONER VOTE OPTION ON ACTION**

- ✓ Vote Yes To Approve
- ✓ Vote No On Approval
- ✓ Abstain From The Vote
- ✓ Recuse From The Vote

### **SPC OFFICIAL VOTE TALLY**

1. Amato – YES TO APPROVE
2. Blanco – YES TO APPROVE
3. Blomberg – YES TO APPROVE
4. Clements – YES TO APPROVE
5. Eanes – YES TO APPROVE
6. Finrow – YES TO APPROVE
7. Fiori – YES TO APPROVE
8. Kaplan – YES TO APPROVE
9. Kinast – YES TO APPROVE
10. Knapton – YES TO APPROVE
11. Mattox – YES TO APPROVE
12. McDonald – YES TO APPROVE
13. Pennington – YES TO APPROVE
14. See – YES TO APPROVE
15. Sheehy – YES TO APPROVE
16. To – YES TO APPROVE

16 members vote to approve

Of the 16 members eligible to vote 16 vote to approve. Action is approved

### **NOTES FOR THE RECORD:**

None

## MEMORANDUM

To Seattle Planning Commission  
From: Barbara Wilson, SPC Director  
RE: SPC ACTION

July 19, 2006

### **SPC ACTION**

#### ***Summary of Action:***

Approve the Final Draft of the July 19, 2006 Seattle Planning Commission letter to Council President Nick Licata. Planning Commission approves sending the letter to City Council to express the Commission support of the 'Bridging the Gap' transportation initiative. The Commission urges the Council to adopt the full scope of this initiative in order to adequately address Seattle's transportation needs.

### **COMMISSIONER VOTE OPTION ON ACTION**

- ✓ Vote Yes To Approve
- ✓ Vote No On Approval
- ✓ Abstain From The Vote
- ✓ Recuse From The Vote

### **SPC OFFICIAL VOTE TALLY**

- 17. Amato– YES TO APPROVE
- 18. Blanco – YES TO APPROVE
- 19. Blomberg – YES TO APPROVE
- 20. Clements – YES TO APPROVE
- 21. Eanes – YES TO APPROVE
- 22. Finrow – YES TO APPROVE
- 23. Fiori – Unavailable for Vote
- 24. Kaplan – YES TO APPROVE
- 25. Kinast – YES TO APPROVE
- 26. Knapton – YES TO APPROVE
- 27. Mattox – YES TO APPROVE
- 28. McDonald – YES TO APPROVE
- 29. Pennington – YES TO APPROVE
- 30. See – YES TO APPROVE
- 31. Sheehy – ABSTAIN
- 32. To – YES TO APPROVE

14 members vote to approve

1 member abstained from the vote

1 member was unavailable for vote (abstain)

Of the 16 members eligible to vote 14 vote to approve. Action is approved

### **NOTES FOR THE RECORD:**

Disclosure: Commissioner Clements discloses that his firm, Zimmer Gunsul Frasca Partnership, at some point in time in the future may possibly seek to become professionally involved with some of the projects as a consultant.